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ABSTRACT

There has been a severe decline in minority students entering preservice teacher education programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, during the current decade. This paper outlines the recruiting and retention strategies directed toward high school students by the university to encourage them to choose teaching as a career. (JD)

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MINORITY STUDENTS ENTERING TEACHER EDUCATION

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF MINORITY STUDENTS
ENTERING TEACHER EDUCATION

During the current decade the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, suffered a severe decline in minority students entering preservice teacher education programs. To combat this decline, the College of Education instituted a number of strategies which are designed to increase the number of minority students prepared to teach.

Problem

The number of minority, predominantly Black, students graduating from the College's Teacher Education Programs, has plummeted during the 1980's:

	Graduates		
	Frequency		
Year	Black	Total	Percentage Black
1980-81	32	540	5.93
1981-82	NA	NA	NA
1982-83	22	415	5.30
1983-84	13	399	3.26
1984-85	12	342	3.51
1985-86	3	322	0.93
1986-87	10	303	3.30
1987-88	2	301	0.66

Though in Fall 1987 the College had only 6 minority students (5 Blacks and 1 Hispanic) among 436 junior and senior level students there were indications that

a College-wide multi-faceted recruitment effort was beginning to attract an increased number of freshmen and sophomore applicants to teacher preparation programs:

	Fall 1987 No. of Applicants in process	Percentage
White	733	95.07
Black	34	4.41
Hispanic	2	0.26
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0.26
Total	771	

Although the number of Black graduates for 1988-89 is expected to remain virtually unchanged from the previous year (three compared to two), significantly more Black students are expected to graduate beginning with the 1989-90 academic year when 9 graduates are projected.

Recruiting Strategies

(1) Minority Recruiter/Advisor Employed

(2) High School Visitations:

During the past two years over 60 Black students from predominantly Black high schools visited the College. During these visits, the following occurred:

- Overview to College
- Tours of the College

- Group Discussion of Issues in Teaching
- Luncheon with College faculty and staff

(3) Mailings

Using the University's Admissions Office prospective black student listing and the ACT indicator system, the College sent information regarding the College's Teacher Education Program to Black students who indicated an interest in teaching.

(4) Black Cultural Center Linkage

The College participated in recruitment programs sponsored by the Black Cultural Center which brought Black high school students to campus to introduce them to the University's programs and services.

(5) Black Future Teacher Scholarships

The College provided five year, $1000/year scholarships to entering Black students in each of seven major teaching fields.

(6) Departmental Minority Recruitment Plans

Each department within the College filed a plan for recruiting minority students.

(7) Future Teacher Association (FTA) Linkages

The College's advisors/recruiters participated at the state and local levels in the activities of FTA clubs.

(8) Teacher Cadet Programs (Proposed for Spring 1989):

A Teacher Cadet Program, like that in South Carolina, will be piloted in two high schools, one of which will be a predominantly Black school. The Cadet Program will provide students with an opportunity to explore the teaching profession while functioning as peer tutors. College of Education faculty will establish close alliances with participating cadets.

(9) "Touch the Future" Seminar (Proposed for Summer 1989)

A week long seminar for rising high school sophomore, junior, and senior students interested in teaching careers is being planned to occur on the University of Tennessee campus during Summer 1989. Special efforts will be made to involve minority students. Funding is being sought from the private sector; participants will attend free of charge.

Retention

(1) Advising/Mentoring:

Each minority student was advised at least once per semester. The purpose of this contact was to assess students' progress toward admission to the Teacher Education Program. Department heads were informed following each grading period of the progress of all Black students seeking entry to their units. Once admitted to teacher education, students were assigned to faculty mentoring teams and progressed through most of the professional studies portion of their programs in intact student clusters.

(2) Apple Core:

Minority students were encouraged to participate in a class designed to stimulate an interest in teaching, to provide a network of support among Black students and advisors, and to promote and encourage enrollment in the Teacher Education Program. Students who were enrolled in this class observed and assisted teachers in schools, as well as met with College faculty and peers for discussion.

(3) Mailings:

Minority students were sent reprints of articles and are invited to attend programs concerning minorities issues in teacher education.

(4) Faculty/Student Reception:

A reception was held during the Fall to facilitate interaction between faculty and Black students.

(5) Teacher Education Admission Test Workshops:

Workshops on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) were conducted by the Advising Center personnel. Special efforts were made to involve minority students in these workshops which were intended to reduce anxiety, assess skills, and provide remediation.